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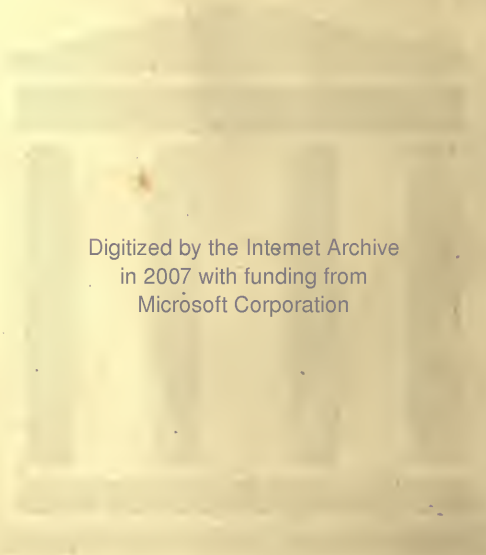
USH SOLITUDES
AND
OTHER VERSES

BY

WILLIAM MAIN







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BUSH SOLITUDES AND OTHER VERSES

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AND

OTHER VERSES

BY

WILLIAM MAIN

GEORGE ROBERTSON & CO.

MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, ADELAIDE, BRISBANE, AND LONDON

1896

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TO

MARY HANNAY FOOTT,
QUEENSLAND.

W. M.

1824726



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BUSH SOLITUDES.

I LOVE to wander in my idle hours
Along the paths that pierce the solitude
Of the vast bush, where giant timber towers
Toward the sky and Nature in the rude
Is all around. Scarcely a sound is heard
To tell of life, for when the sun mounts high
All Nature slumbers, and not e'en a bird
Will face the burning monarch of the sky
Until his slanting rays, shorn of their power,
Declare another day is well-nigh done.
Then from the shadow of some sheltering
bower
Wake choristers to cheer the sinking sun.
With notes, some harsh, some sweet, the
songsters come ;
The parrots, screaming, dash across the blue,

The jackass laughs, high on a tall; gaunt gum,
And in the scrub is heard the cat-bird's
mew ;

The stockwhip cracks around as if a mob
Of travelling cattle trod their weary way
To distant market. Birds are there that rob
The sky of sunset hues, and e'en make gay
The ti-tree flats. Now, with departing day,
Bears and opossums wake, and dingoes
prowl

Around, or chase a luckless wallaby,
And make night hideous, answering howl
with howl.

'Twas day ; 'tis night ! The silvery moonlight
steals

Its way among the trees ; the falling dew
Kisses the gum leaves, and the dry grass feels
Its gracious touch ; and now the dreariest
view

Assumes a beauty. Here a little creek
Breaks o'er a rock, and in a silver shower
It disappears, its onward way to seek
Through a dense scrub, where soon the
magic power

Of the full moon reveals a beauteous scene,
Fit home for sprites, a marvellous fairy
den :

The huge vines clasp the trees, and stretch
between,

Like giant serpents in a ghostly glen ;
High over all, upright, the lordly palm
Raises his head to view the distant lands ;
The lowlier ferntree, graceful in the calm
Retreat below, each perfect frond expands ;
The drooping bird-nest circles round the
trees,
And, with the staghorn, decks them in
return

For home and safety ; and the gentle breeze
Brings life to all the palms and vines ; each
fern

Feels the soft breath, and bends in sympathy.
O'er all the scrub the glorious moonlight
spreads

Its glamour. Moist leaves glisten as they
sway,

And diamonds sparkle, caught on countless
threads

Woven by spiders. Friendly shadow hides
The shattered trunks and leaves of ages
dead.

Here all is silent save the creek that glides
With murmuring ripples from its fountain-
head.

The moonlight fades before approaching day ;
The birds again break forth in joyful song ;
The dingoes hasten to their lairs, away
Far from all beaten tracks, to sleep. Ere
long

The sun's first rays appear—all cold and dim,
But gaining strength and splendour as the
mist

Of morning rises—and each bending limb,
Each quivering leaf, showers brilliants. To
exist

Is joy while Nature chants her morning hymn.

ONCE ON A TIME.

ONCE on a time—how many a Christmas tale
Has thus been opened since the days of old !
Once on a time—each little face turns pale,
Or bright eyes sparkle as the story's told.

Once on a time, the fairies, lost by day,
In sylvan glades danced in the pale moon-
light ;

Once on a time, some kindly little fay,
With magic wand, made wrong give place
to right.

Once on a time, the knights were always brave,
And fought for glances from fair maidens'
eyes ;

Once on a time, 'twas "Victory or the grave"—
The victor wins the maid, the vanquished
dies.

Once on a time, some grand, heroic deed
Was done by valiant men in Freedom's cause ;
Once on a time, some traitor, filled with greed,
Betrayed his trust, or broke most sacred
laws.

Once on a time—that story most endeared—
The Wise Men watched a bright new Star
arise ;
Once on a time, the angel host appeared,
And with a strange, sweet anthem woke the
skies.

Once on a time—yes ! Christ the Lord was born,
To bear our sorrows, and to soothe our
pains ;

Once on a time, on that first Christmas morn,
He came to earth, who high in Heaven
reigns—

Once on a time, wrought out redemption's plan,
Glory to God, Peace and Goodwill to man.

A REVERIE.

TICK, tick, tick, how loud you're sounding,
 Good old watch, with measured beat !
 Long you've marked the fleeting seconds
 Of Time's steady, sure retreat.
 You have had your times of sickness,
 When your wheels would not go round :
 Not your fault !—my clumsy fingers
 Had your mainspring overwound.
 Yes ! with you the idle moments
 Have been few and far between ;
 How I wish that my own record,
 When made up, would show as clean !
 You are old, but steady living
 Brings with age its own reward,

Better far, old friend, if, like you,
I'd been always on my guard.
Watches seem a bit like horses :
Some for racing are inclined,
Others always, like slow coaches,
Falling more and more behind.
Outside some are eighteen-carat,
Stylish finish on the case ;
Good looks do not make a goer—
Shining coat's no proof of pace.
You are just a common silver,
With a plain enamelled dial,
But for years you've proved a stayer,
Up to time on every trial.
Well I mind the day I bought you,
Cheap !—your fashion's out of date—
Just the day my old black Bessie
Won the Maincamp Maiden Plate.
That night wasn't there a shindy !
Yes, I well remember now,
You did all you could to make me
Clear out long before the row.
Told me that my darling Bessie—
Not the mare this time, the Miss—

Down beside the sleepy river
 Waited for a parting kiss.
Confound you ! stop that ceaseless ticking,
 Let those stale old tales alone !
Making me quite sentimental
 Over days that long are gone.
Time will see both you and me out,
 Though he's passing fast away ;
Yours is not perpetual motion—
 Worn out you'll be, too, some day.
Tick, tick, tick—come, take it easy ;
 Stop your yarns, they'll surely keep.
Now my pipe is only ashes,
 Better let a fellow sleep !

AUSTRALIAN SONGS.

AUSTRALIA ! I often would sing in thy praise,
But few are our poets, unknown are their
lays.

The songs that we sing are the auld sangs sae
fine,

But why should we always sing sangs o' lang
syne ?

When afloat on our rivers our voices we raise,
'Tis only to sing o' the Doon's banks and
braes ;

On our own winding Brisbane are scenes quite
as fair

As any Burns saw on the banks o' the Ayr.

The Scotch hills are bright when the heather's
in bloom,

And sweet is the rowan tree, bonnie's the
broom !

But our ranges are crowned with rare cedar
and pine

In the land of banana and purple grape vine.

We have no ruined castles on guard round our
coast,

Made famous in story, or haunted by ghost ;
But slabs are soon split when we fell the right
tree,

And home's still sweet home, howe'er humble
it be.

If our songs only praise the old home far
away,

Remember that Rome was not built in a day.
We must wait for the tide, and the tide always
turns ;

Why, Scotland was old when she bore Robbie
Burns !

But our country is young, and she's wondrous
fair—

How blue is her sky, and how pure is her
air!—

Still, just like the bairn in the auld Scottish
sang,

Australia must creep long before she can gang.

THE BUSHMAN'S FRIEND.

TOBACCO ! fragrant, soothing weed,
We hail thee with delight ;
Sweet in the morning ; sweeter still
When day gives place to night.
As evening shadows close around,
We seek the camp-fire's glow ;
Stretched at our ease, each pipe is lit,
And cool blue clouds we blow.
We watch each puff as it ascends
In circles through the air,
And as it swiftly vanishes
So vanishes each care.
Our tempers, often sorely tried
By troubles of the day,

Grow sweet again at eventide
'Neath good tobacco's sway.
The king that sits upon his throne,
The ploughman in his cottage,
The youth, though scarcely in his teens,
The old man in his dotage,
The rich, the poor, both black and white,
Mankind of every type,
In north, and south, and east, and west,
Are brothers of the pipe.

A POET'S DILEMMA.

A POOR poet sat on his cane-bottomed chair,
He had papers, and pens, and ink,
But he looked the picture of dire despair,
He pulled his beard, and he tore his hair,
For his rhymes refused to clink.
Alas ! for to-morrow is publishing day ;
No verses ! Oh, what will the editor say !

So he stated the simple facts of the case,
How he courted the muse in vain,
Till with thinking he almost was black in the
face,

But thinking all night would not fill up the
space,

For no rhymes were in his brain.
Then, pressing a hand to his weary head,
He put out the lamp, and went to bed.

The editor sat in his own little den,
And he smoked the pipe of peace ;
Nor bothered his head about poetry men,
Nor seemed to regret that the poor fellow's pen,
To write his rhymes should cease.
As a matter of fact he was quite content,
For the mail brought a late advertisement.

A BUSH SELECTION.

AN old slab house, surrounded by a fence
 That once was post and rail, now mere
 pretence

To save the garden ; out of line it stands,
 Or rather hangs together, for the hands
 That should have kept it firm in its old age
 Have filled the gaps with saplings. Cattle
 wage

Unceasing warfare 'gainst each weakened spot,
 And play the mischief with the garden plot.

An old slab house—the slabs are good as new,
 Untouched by storms, although the winds blow
 through

The inch of space that now exists between

Each slab. The heavy rain and west winds
keen

Find easy entrance, and the folk endure
What, but for laziness, they soon could cure.
The roof of shingles is, all old and rotten—
Shingles don't stand like slabs when long
forgotten—

Many are missing, and their place has been
Supplied by tin, that once held kerosene,
Cut into squares, and easily placed between
The other shingles. Still some gaps are seen
Waiting to let the falling raindrops in ;
The farmer waiting till another tin
Is empty, or, perhaps the reason why,
Waiting because the weather now is dry.
There is no stable, though there is a steed—
A long-legged, skinny, half-bred, useless weed—
Useless for work. Each farmer wants a hack
To take him to the township, there and back,
In decent time ; you'll find, in many cases,
'Twill land a fiver at the local races
If it is sent to win, and he can square
The butcher, who has got a better mare.
No milking shed for the half-dozen cows—

The profit no such luxury allows—
Only grass-fed, milked in an open bail,
The half a dozen scarce can fill a pail.
About the house a few fruit trees still grow,
Mostly half dead, but why he does not know
Who planted them in land untrenched, un-
drained.
“Fruit is no good,” he always had maintained.

Such was Jack Thomson's home, and such his
life,
And, if not blest with brains, he had a wife
Who bore him children, and she must contrive,
Though oft hard set, to keep them all alive.
Before effect there must, of course, come cause,
And bush selections follow Nature's laws.
Jack gave up ploughing, not without good
reason :
The land was bad, no matter what the season ;
At best he could but plant and try to raise
On his poor soil a scanty crop of maize.
When crops were good, then down the market
fell ;

When crops were bad, Thomson had none to sell.

So he gave ploughing best, and looked around
For other work, if such could but be found.
He had one bit of luck : the Government,
With ample funds, on rail extension bent,
Invited tenders for a line, surveyed
Not far from Jack's selection, to be made
Within two years. The contract soon was let,
And Thomson thought, " There's corn in Egypt
yet."

He had no money, but a good new dray,
On the time-payment system, straight away
He bought, and worked eight honest hours a
day

Carting for sub-contractors ; but the pay
Was not all profit, for horse feed was dear,
And his young family grew with every year.

But this was long ago. The stir and life
Of rail construction and the frequent strife
Of drunken navvies at the old main camp
Are talked of only when the flickering lamp

Is lit, and in the uninviting room
Tries hard to chase away the evening gloom.
The horse and dray were sold—a backward
 move;
Jack takes life easy, and things don't improve.

Bush children have but little of the fool
About them, still they must be sent to school
By force of arms. In this—'tis such a pity —
They're not unlike their cousins of the city.
But Nellie Thomson, though no model child
(One likes them best—well, just a little wild),
Was early taken with a wish to know
Why this was thus, and what was so-and-so.
Books Nell would read whenever she could get
 them,
Till she got one on seeds and when to set
 them.
Nell read of plants with names so very strange
That to pronounce them was beyond the range
Of her attainments. Soon she learned to prize
The many flowers that, as by magic, rise
To sun themselves beneath our southern sky,

Making earth brilliant—blossoms that glorify
A sixteen-perch allotment, if but taste
Rescues the too oft bare, unsightly waste.
Nell was the eldest, and her brothers knew
Her as their leader—loved and feared her
too.

For oft she made them, on a holiday,
Work at her garden when they wished to
play

Or fish for catfish in the little creek—
The one redeeming feature of the place,
Summer and winter, down the waters race
From some high spring, their destiny to seek.

The bright lights shine on beauteous city
belles ;

Glad are the eyes that glance at other eyes.
Hark ! now the music of the anthem swells,
The Governor ! and all the people rise.
The bush selection and this scene so gay
Are brought together by our fairy's spell ;
For many a plant, and many a choice bouquet,
Come from the home of clever little Nell.

The old slab house still stands, but on the hill
A good new house of weatherboards soon will
Defy the rain and all the winds that blow
From the four corners. Now sweet roses grow
In grand profusion down the gentle slope,
And fill wise Nellie's heart with joyful hope.

LOVE.

Love lasts for aye !

Love never dies

Nor fades away !

'Neath brighter skies

Love lives, and grows,

A beauteous rose,

That every morn

Sweet scent bestows,

Without a thorn

To hurt the hand

That stretches forth

To test its worth

In that fair land.

Love lasts for aye !
 A purer love
 Than now holds sway
 On earth ! Above
 Love reigns supreme !
 The fairest dream
 Of human mind
 Is but a beam
 Of love ! Not blind
 Beyond the veil
 Is love, but proves
 Bright-eyed—no pale
 Sad earthly loves
 Can enter there !
 The glad songs rise
 High on the air.
 Perfect each chord !
 Complete each move !
 Sublime each word !
 No wild despair,
 Nor tears, nor sighs !
 For God is love.

BUSH LIFE.

SOME sing praises of life on the ocean,
 While others delight in the hum
 Of the city ; but give me the life of the bush,
 The scent of the wattle and gum.

Then away to the bush, where the
 wattle and gum,
 The blood-wood and ironbark grow ;
 With the cedar and pine on the ranges
 so fine,
 Ti-tree in the swamps down below.

For clothes I've two shirts and my moleskins,
 To want more's neither reason nor rhyme—
 The wealthiest man in the city
 Wears only one suit at a time.

Then away to the bush, &c.

'Tis true that the bush makes few fortunes ;
Never mind, there is plenty to eat !
And that's more than many a fellow
Can say that keeps tramping a street.
Then away to the bush, &c.

Let's drink to a life in the bush, lads,
We're happy though fortune may frown !
God made the pure air of the country,
Man makes the vile smells in the town !
Then away to the bush, where the
wattle and gum,
The blood-wood and ironbark grow ;
With the cedar and pine on the ranges
so fine,
Ti-tree in the swamps down below.

HIS FIRST NIGHT.

'TWAS the night of the election, I went in to
hear the news ;

To me it did not matter, but a change,
A drink, a yarn, are welcome just to keep
away the blues

When a lonely chap, you know, feels some-
what strange.

It was in the blacksmith's paddock that I
turned my young horse out,

Near a small pub. in the outskirts, for the
grass

Was the only kind of tucker he knew anything
about,

And a stall feed don't suit neddies of his class.

I met old Jim—you'll pardon me, his name is
really Jim—

And Alick Grant, with spirits sadly down
Since the days when we were younger and we
three were in the swim

When anything was going on in town.

So we downed imported spirits to a moderate
extent—

You can't shout very strong on just five bob!
But I felt a little fresher, and a trifle more
content,

When I went to catch my horse—for rhyme
say cob.

He had bushed himself entirely in that little
bit of ground ;

It was dark, I couldn't spot him anywhere ;
But I saw a light still shining, and I heard the
muffled sound

Of voices in the Golden Crown just there.

Well, I got in, and I mentioned that I could
not find my horse ;

Said the boss, a new arrival, "That's all
right !

You'll get him in the morning ; he'll be safe
enough, of course.

Come round. What's yours ?—we're wetting
my first night."

So I joined the party, friendly-like, and helped
them with the beer ;

The pub. had just changed hands I knew
before,

And the new boss was providing, free to all,
his liquid cheer.

"My first night—have another—plenty
more !"

I'd been first night at a show—which means
an extra charge and crush,

And is really a mistake, for time will rub
And polish a performance, while it slackens off
the rush—

But I'd never struck a first night at a pub.

And that first night, too, a free night, with the
liquor all A1—

For we made a fairish sample of the bar ;
Laughed at all the ancient stories that the new
boss sat and spun,
While we thought, "Poor chap ! 'E dunno
where 'e are.' "

For the place was going down hill since the
railway knocked the coach.

In the good times it did fifty notes a week ;
But our new man said the quality of every
cask he'd broach

Would make his house the best near Goe-
bung Creek.

Well, he didn't know the district, and we don't
cry stinking fish

When a new chum comes whose pockets still
hold coin.

We spoke up for the chances and of ounces to
to the dish—

We all knew likely spots if he would join.

At sunrise Duke was standing near the rails ;
it saved a tramp—

How I missed him in that paddock beats me
quite.

“ My saddle’s at the blacksmith’s, boss ; how
much for last night’s camp ? ”

“ Look here, d’ye see, it was my shout—first
night.”

I thanked him for his kindness, and he praised
the points of Duke,

So I thought I’d let him have a little light—

“ Don’t touch a claim in Goebung, and don’t
score drinks in your book ; ”

He smiled and said, “ D’ye see, it was first
night.”

So I left him ; but I wonder how he’ll get on at
that game,

Turning old-established customs upside
down—

A publican, but knocking down his cheque just
all the same

As a miner or a shearer when in town.

For a man that keeps a bush pub. can't afford
to have a heart ;

He's got to be a human parasite,
Manipulating poison, keeping men on till they
part

Their last stiver—turn them out whatever
night.

And if there's any trouble, why, the constable's
at hand ;

It need not trouble him, for that's the way
To carry on the business, in a free, enlightened
land—

Kind hearts and decent grog don't seem to
pay.

LIFE.

How sad is Life to most ! The very joy
We see around us is, we know, unreal.
E'en laughter is a mask we but employ
To cheer our friends and our own grief
conceal.

Each heart alone knows its own bitterness—
The gnawing pain, the weary, deep unrest
That lasts as long as life, without redress,
Till some, despairing, put Death to the test.
As some lone bushman, far from beaten
track,
The sun gone down, knows not the home-
ward way,

Each step he takes, perchance, may but lead
back,

And forfeit all the progress of the day.

Lost in the night! But day will break again.

The sun will rise, and he shall reach his
home.

So we may hope our life is not in vain—

That, like the sunrise, perfect joy will come.

But for the night we would not prize the day,

And thus we know why life is surely sad.

A little longer, and the first bright ray

Shall pierce the gloom, and make us ever
glad.

THE GOOD-AS-GOLD P.C.

'Twas summer time in Queensland, in the bush
Tom Mitchell lay,
Old bluey he'd been humping since the morn-
ing ;
His mate, Joe Smith, was baking, so he smoked
the time away,
And watched the setting sun the range adorn-
ing.

A miner in Australia ! and the gold is hard to
find ;
How oft prospecting ends in dire despair !

Tom thought to make a fortune when he left
his home behind,
But still he's building castles in the air.

* * * * *

Now good-bye, quartz and gumtrees ! Tom has
struck a real pile claim,
And sails away for home from Moreton Bay ;
Hard weary years he waited for the wealth
that was his aim ;
But gold makes smooth the longed-for home-
ward way.

A hero 'mongst his own folk ! when he gains
that distant shore
He sees the happy faces known so well ;
With heartfelt joy they greet him, his own love
shall wait no more,
All is merry as the merriest marriage bell.

They spend a pleasant evening, drink a friendly
glass of wine,
Strange tales he has to tell them by the score ;

And then they join their hands around and
sing "For Auld Lang Syne"—

Tom feels the dear old words as ne'er before.

"But seas between us braid hae rolled." Yes!
this full well he knew,

The simple words bring thoughts so sweet
and strange ;

"We've wandered many a weary foot"—had he
not proved them true,

Through Queensland bush, o'er many a track-
less range?

The slim white hand slips from his grasp—the
faces are a myth—

Tom wakens up to find he has been sold ;
The bush is all around him yet, and now he
hears Joe Smith

Shout "Hurry up! you'll find your supper
cold."

*

*

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Many long years have gone since Tom opened
his eyes,
Just to find that the billy was cold ;
But working and waiting have brought him a
rise,
He has got what he longed for—the gold.

Yes! Mitchell and party have struck it at
last ;
’Twas the “ Good-as-Gold ” reef that Tom
found ;
His dreams of the future are things of the past,
He’s the wealthiest man on the ground.

Twenty head of new stampers are crushing his
stone,
And it runs good two ounces all round,
With a patch here and there, if you take it
alone,
That will go quite an ounce to the pound.

Old Tom's got a good thing !—but gold cannot
buy

Back the years, and the bright hopes now
fled.

Lucky man ! they all call him, but hear not
the sigh

As he thinks of his dear ones long dead.

A lonely old man ! he can purchase with gold

A home and a wife if he will ;

But the love of his youth ne'er again he'll
behold,

The void in his heart will ne'er fill.

DOROTHY.

My own Dorothy, darling, proud of your pretty
dresses !

A little earth-born angel, with long silken
tresses !

Say rather a little fairy !—which do you prefer ?
Angel's a shade too perfect, fairies may some-
times err.

Well, then, a little fairy you shall be to me,
With love your only magic, dear little Dorothy.

Some day, my fairy princess, a prince will come
in view,

And claim all your sweet kisses as part of his
royal due.

You will list to his old, old story, that none but
him can tell,

And go with him to his castle, if he holds the
magic spell.

Now this is how you will know him, when he
drops from the clouds above—

The spell is the same as the story, 'tis love,
dear, just true love.

Sleepy? You like not my story? Well, hold
up your little head,

Kiss me good-night, sweetest fairy, now vanish
to your little bed.

Good-night, and good-bye, for the morning will
find me away once again,

But in this old heart, fairly conquered with
kisses, my fairy shall reign.

ELYSIUM.

THERE is a land where troubles never enter,
Where life is sweet, and love and friendship
reign ;
Home of all homes, of happiness chief centre,
Though in that land man cannot long
remain.

All have been there, have tested all its
treasures,
And found them true, each dearest hope
fulfilled ;
Rest for the weary, health, and all the
pleasures
That wealth can bring to hearts by hardship
chilled.

Oh ! happy land, where care is ever banished,
 'Neath thy bright sky we all grow young
 again ;
Envy and malice, all life's ills have vanished,
 And gone with them is every thought of
 pain.

Enchanted Dreamland ! wandered have we
 often
 On thy bright shores, and called thy beauty
 ours ;
Touched by thy glamour, hardest hearts will
 soften ;
 Long parted friends meet in thy mystic
 bowers.

Lovers thy charm through ages all have
 known,
 For love meets love to wander hand in hand
Through thy sweet shades unhindered and
 alone—
 Nothing can part them while in dear
 Dreamland.

Fair Dreamland is what seems to each one
best,

And as we ask so shall we find it given ;
When earthly cares are o'er, and death brings
rest,

Dreamland shall be our long last home, our
Heaven.

THE COOK'S MATE.

HE was Henry Alexander Patrick William
Eglinton,
Who at home a mighty swell had been, this
long-named, hard-up son
Of aristocratic parents; but his pure-bred
pedigree
Did little good for Sonny when he came across
the sea.
It was Sonny he was known by—I don't mind
now how he got
The name at first; no matter, it did service for
the lot.
Our Sonny, though a hard-up, and not blest
with too much brain,

Did his own fair share when working, both in
sunshine and in rain ;
And when he had the ready he could do the
duke as well
As ever in the city, and we all admired our
swell.
Poor Sonny struck a dry stage, and he could
not raise the wind,
When, thinking o'er his troubles, he just
chanced to bring to mind
His cousin, Archie Brownhill, then a planter in
Fiji,
And he thought how very pleasant it would be
to go and see
His old chum and the islands, if he could but
raise the fare—
But one pound was all his riches, and that
would not take him there.
It was Sydney he was stuck in, so he tried the
boats all round,
Till he struck a little steamer that for Fiji
straight was bound.
He asked and got a billet as assistant to the
cook,

And he gladly washed the dishes, for it suited,
just, his book.

But when they reached the islands Sonny
quickly slipped ashore,

And, got up in his newest togs, down on the
agent bore.

He asked how much a passage to his cousin's
port would be.

"One pound." Our Sonny paid it, and a happy
man was he

When, with his old-time swagger, he boarded
his old craft,

And roundly called the steward to take his
luggage aft.

So he met his cousin, smiling—as a gentleman
should look—

But, my word, he never told him how he
washed up for the cook.

IN MEMORIAM.

H.M.S. "VICTORIA," 22ND JUNE, 1893.

SMOOTH is the sea, and from a cloudless sky
The glorious sun showers down his brilliant
 rays
On line-of-battle ships, and each displays
The British ensign high.

They sail in line, and move in sympathy
One with the other as the signal shows
From the flag-ship ; they open out, or close,
Or motionless they lie.

And now they steam full speed ; the waters fly
Apart from each sharp prow—too near ! oh,
heaven !

Is this but mimic war ?—the air is riven
By many a loud death-cry.

Too near, alas ! we know not how nor why
The *Camperdown* with her death-dealing
ram
Runs the *Victoria* down in daylight calm
Beneath a bright blue sky.

Alas, proud ship ! to-day though didst defy
An Empire's foes ; but one destructive blow,
All unintended, swift, and thou art low,
Though friends alone float nigh.

Alas, brave men ! in vain for you we sigh ;
An Empire's grief will ne'er bring back
again
One single life. Alas ! but not in vain
Do brave men live and die.

PEACE AND GOODWILL.

THE years roll on, and each year brings
Old Father Christmas back again.
The sweet, familiar greeting rings,
Borne first to earth on angels' wings,
Peace and goodwill to men.

Peace and goodwill, hail ! joyful sound, -
Harbinger of a better life,
When men this weary world around
Will but by cords of love be bound—
True love, that ends all strife.

Then let us, through the coming year,
 Endeavour always to fulfil
Christ's last command. We need not fear
 The future then, for love draws near
 To men peace and goodwill.

A PIG-TALE.

IN an old house surrounded by a wall
Lived the schoolmaster, learned, lean, and
tall ;

A careful man, who guarded well his pence,
No one could charge him with improvidence.
His boarders knew few culinary joys—
Is not high living very bad for boys ?
But still on Sunday morning he would try
To please them with a tempting dish of fry :
Sometimes a liver, as a special favour,
Cut with the ham knife, just to give it flavour.
His garden large, but running rather wild,
Had great fruit trees, admired by every child ;
Luxuriantly his humble cabbage grew,

It grieved him much that he could use but
few ;

To sell them would be rather *infra dig.*,
And thus it came about he kept a pig.

'Twas summer holidays. The boys at home
Out in the fields found fresh delight to roam,
Or in the waters of some sheltered bay
Sailed, fished, and swam in their own boyish
way.

Tom, Dick, and Harry, likewise Bill and Sam,
Once more rejoiced in home-baked cakes and
jam,

Light-hearted, happy, free from master's rule,
Forgetting e'en the very name of school.

Meanwhile the master, also free from cares,
With ample leisure, lovingly prepares
A learned essay showing how to train,
As he thinks best, a boy's receptive brain.
At other times he would his garden dig,
And every day he went and fed the pig—
Or, rather, gave it food with sparing hand—

Such appetite he ne'er could understand.
The house was empty, for the master knew,
The boys away, there was no work to do ;
Rather than keep them let his servants go
To see their friends—so kind of him, you know !
E'en the housekeeper, old and rather lame,
Asked and got leave to visit some old dame ;
But this the master troubled not, for he,
A simple man, could make his cup of tea,
And fry a chop and boil an egg or so—
What more can mortal man want here below ?

A conference scholastic sat that year,
The master with his essay must appear.
To lock the door's a simple thing to do—
Small chance there was of burglars breaking
through.

He packed his bag, put on his Sunday rig,
And then remembered he must leave the pig.
A difficulty this, you must confess,
He'd be away a fortnight, more or less.
He liked no stranger-folk about his place,
The thought of payment emphasized the case.

“I know,” thought he, “how much she eats
per day ;

Why not provide, in just the usual way,
Rations for fourteen days, and something
over?—

In holidays e’en pigs should live in clover.”
Pleased with the thought, on that auspicious
morn

He gave the pig a bucketful of corn,
Plenty of cabbage, filled the trough with slops ;
The pig, astonished, stood and licked her chops.
This problem solved he caught the forenoon
train—

The pig was right till he came home again.

Things sometimes seem too good to be quite
true—

The hungry pig saw food she must get through ;
She did not stay to think what this might
mean,

She only felt her hunger was most keen ;
Here were supplies all fresh from Plenty’s
horn ;

Straightway she started on the master's corn.
The midday sun looked down and saw the sow
Making great headway 'mong the cabbage now ;
The setting sun—as usual in the west—
Left piggy doing still her level best.
The morning came ; the earliest ray serene
That reached the sty discovered it quite
 clean—
No corn, no cabbage—oh ! ye gracious powers,
A fortnight's rations gone in twenty hours !

Scholastic themes are foreign to my story—
The master came home covered thick with
 glory ;
Early next morn, recovered from fatigue,
He wandered forth to see how fared the pig.
Alas ! the sight deprived him of his breath—
The stupid animal was cold in death.

JACKASSES.

THOSE jackasses sitting on that ancient gum
 Look wise as our judges in robes of state ;
 What a serious air ! now, don't they look
 rum !

The big one has just spun a yarn to his
 mate.

Ha ! ha ! Ha ! ha ! ha !—why what are they
 after ?

Whatever's the cause of such boisterous
 laughter ?

Though often I've heard it—aye, times by the
 score—

I'm blest if I know what makes jackasses roar !

Jackasses would laugh if a real royal king
Was passing that tree with his golden
crown

And sceptre — they'd make their loud
laughter ring,

So little care they for a proud monarch's
frown.

Ha ! ha ! Ha ! ha ! ha !—to them it's all one,
They laugh at each boss, on his own blessed
run ;

No respecters of persons, they sit on that tree
And laugh at poor duffers just like you and
me.

If they'd just stop that row, on the old ring-
barked gum,

The wisest of birds they would seem, but,
alas !

Not one of the breed will consent to sing
dumb—

The emblem of folly's a laughing jackass !

Ha ! ha ! Ha ! ha ! ha !—they know not a
boy

In Australia would dare their charmed life to
destroy,
So whatever may come within range of their
sight
They greet with loud laughter—perhaps they
are right.

THE ALBATROSS.

Out on the wide, deep sea,
Where the sun may rise and set
O'er only the ocean free,
Where fisherman ne'er cast net,
There we watched the swing, on tireless wing,
Of an albatross we met.

One at first ; then came a score,
Came from we know not where.
Around us they circled, and o'er,
Scanning our ship with care ;
Then astern of our boat we saw them float,
At rest on the ocean bare.

Their strong wings néver fail
 When the raging storm-fiends come ;
They triumph o'er the gale,
 Wild spirits of living foam.
But when ships draw near to land they fear,
 And flee to their ocean home.

MY NEWEST WOMAN.

I AM watching for her coming, while the evening
 shadows fall,

Now the glory has departed from the day,
And I am weary waiting for my love—the best
 of all—

She will chase my dreary fancies all away.

She can comfort me and love me in the darker
 hours of life,

And love me still the same when fortune's
 kind ;

Just the best of little women, and the dearest,
 sweetest wife

That in all the ends of earth you'll ever find.

So I hate to be without her, and the house is
not like home

When she's out of it for even half a day,
And it surely is misfortune when those clever
women come

And take her off to hear them say their say.

Will they wrangle o'er the minutes of last
meeting, and then move

The previous question o'er and o'er again?
'Mid a scene of great excitement will the chair-
woman reprove

Strong language, and fair play for all main-
tain?

The new women are not charming to old-
fashioned kind of men,

Who long to keep them from the tiresome
strain

Of office and of business, or the unrestricted
pen

That some of them have got upon the brain.

Why, now the bell is ringing, and my wife not
in her place !

And dinner all alone is never nice—

Oh, here she is—my darling ! “ Dearest Jack,
I’ve had a race ;

I’m late, although I moved adjournment
twice !

“ But I had to leave them sitting, for I knew
you would be mad,

So I placed my resignation in the hands
Of the president, and left them ; that’s the end
of it. You’re glad ?

It strikes me very much they’re shifting
sands.

“ It is not the work for women, or at least not
in the way

They seem to want to do it—just like man.
We’ve the training of the young ones—that
should be a good big say ;
And besides, it plainly is old Nature’s plan.

“ We have brains, if we but use them—there’s
a proper time and place ;

But the rougher work we women cannot do ;
For the greatest, grandest duty that we owe
the human race

Is the motherhood—to that we must be
true.”

“ Well said, my newest women !—will you have
the undercut ? —

Your sentiments are mine—please pass the
salt ;

But what about the spinsters, dear, and —— ”

“ Jack ! you know that ‘ but ’

Is not the poor, lone, single women’s fault.

“ Only let them all get husbands just as kind
as one I know,

And they’ll give up public business life, and
roam

No more in those strange pathways—where
they never want to go,

For a woman’s longing is for love and home.

“And though I left the meeting—dear, will
you have beer or tea?—

We women have some wrongs you must put
right,

And, like the dames we read of in the days of
chivalry,

I name you now my own true valiant
knight.

“So for my sake you must battle with all
things not *comme il faut* ;

Until our wrongs are righted never yield,
And you’ll find the newest woman will be
quickly altered, so

That she’ll proudly claim sweet home as her
own field.

“For love she’ll bear her portion of the
troubles of this life,

And scorn to purchase ease with old men’s
gold ;

’Tis the young man is the coward—let him
claim her as a wife,

And with her face the future as of old !

“ But the devil with the flesh-pots, and the
club, and all the rest

React upon poor women of to-day ;
So you’ve got to fight our battles, and good
men can do that best,
While the newest, truest women show the
way.”

I’m smoking hard, my second pipe, and think-
ing all the while ;

I’m blest if I know what one man can do !
As a knight I should do something, though it
scarcely suits my style—

Look here, young men, you all must marry
too !

SPRING.

ONCE more, sweet Spring, we greet thy gentle
presence,

At thy command wild Nature lives again,
Casts off her brown robe—gift of sombre
winter—

And dons bright green, 'neath thy enchanting
rain.

'Tis nothing new, this change to youth and
beauty,

Old as old Time, who o'er all earth has sway ;
But shall we then despise thy glorious bounty ?

Ah, no ! sweet Spring, we love thy flowery
way !

We hail thee as a friend, from friends long
parted

By angry seas and snow-capped mountains
wild,

But always true, still bright and loving-hearted,
Contented now we breathe thy zephyrs mild.

Oh, stay with us! art thou of wandering
weary?

Why shouldst thou thus be ever on the
wing?

It cannot be, when other lands lie dreary

And sigh for thee! Adieu, then, gentle
spring.

A BIT OF HUMAN NATURE.

NEAR to a butcher's shop in a side street
Stood a big bushman, looking at his feet
As if uncertain which should take the lead ;
A grand, strong man, of a hardworking breed,
His yellow beard untrimmed, his shoulders
broad

And slightly rounded, fit for any load
That falls to average man ; on them his swag
Was swung. He held a bulky paper bag
In his left hand, and now and then his right
Would grasp a friendly rail. A common
sight—

Just a drunk man, but still his wavering eyes
Looked blue and kindly, like Australian skies .

When "Delta" has departed, and our sun
Has not retired before dread "Epsilon."
Slowly he worked his way along somehow,
Took all the space the footpath would allow,
In corkscrew fashion, as on a steep ridge,
Doubling the distance to Victoria Bridge.
He met two children rushing fast along,
The first a boy, singing that joyful song
Of "Daisy," and, a step or two behind,
A little girl, hatless, and the wind
Was playing with her unrestricted hair.
Brother and sister seemed this little pair.
The boy went on, but not the little maid ;
She saw the bushman, and seemed just afraid
There was not room for two when he was
there ;
She was not strong enough to claim her share.
The bushman saw her too, came to a stand—
If stand it could be called ; he made a grand
Attempt to stop involuntary motion,
But kept on swaying like the restless ocean.
And thus they stood confronting one another,
The maiden anxious to rejoin her brother
Could she but pass this big, unsteady man,

Who blocked the way as only drunk men can.
The bushman smiled, as if some funny wag
Had made a joke. He opened up the bag,
And the child saw bananas, ripe and big ;
For the drunk man she cared not now a fig,
But seized the fruit, and, with a cry of joy,
Slipped past his legs, and ran to join the boy.

NOTE. — “Delta” and “Epsilon.” This is Mr.
Wragge’s way of distinguishing storms.

A NICHT AT HAME.

TUNE up your fiddle, Sandy, man,
Gie us an auld Scotch tune ;
Hoo weel they stan' the test o' time !
We're longing for the soon'
O' guid catgut. When your richt han'
The bow guides o'er the strings
We leave Australia far behind ;
Borne on swift Fancy's wings
We see the Scottish hills again,
And wander through her glens ;
We hear the auld familiar tongue
That each true Scotsman kens.
We see the very land o' Burns
And visit Ayr's auld toon,

And wander on the bonnie banks,
The banks and braes o' Doon.
Play it again, that air sae sweet,
The saddest o' his sangs,
The story o' a heartless chiel,
A lassie and her wrangs.
Play "Scots wha hae" and "Rothesay Bay,"
That sang's as guid's the best ;
"O' a' the airts the wind can blaw"—
We dinna lo'e the west
In Queensland noo, but we're at hame
The nicht. Come rosin weel
Your bow, and let us hear the pipes,
And then we'll hae a reel.
A reel's the best o' dancing tunes ;
Wha ca's us a dull race ?
Man, naething maks sic souple taes,
And fast maun be the pace
That brings the dancers tae a stan',
Though like a tap they spin.
Na ! na ! gin they but get the chance
They'll dance the fiddler din.
Ay, finish up wi' "Auld Lang Syne ;"
Come, join and sing it a',

For proudly we lo'e Scotland yet,
Though lang we've been awa'
Frae her wild shores and heather hills,
Far frae her lowlands fine,
Australians though we live and dee,
We're Scotch "for auld lang syne."

NEW AUSTRALIA.

WE told you so !—as each fresh cablegram
 Spreads news of discontent from Paraguay.
 We told you so !—the lion and the lamb
 Must still live on in their unfriendly way ;
 Peace and goodwill have not yet come to stay.

It was a dream—"United all we stand !"
 The thought was life to many a weary soul.
 "Shoulder to shoulder," "brothers," "hand in
 hand ;"
 Brave words ! but hearts, to reach the longed-
 for goal,
 Must love and beat as a harmonious whole.

Alas ! too strong the self-imposed test
For human nature, and the cold, wide sea
Rolls now between them and our glorious
west,
Where they might dream in safety, and as
free
As ever men in Paraguay could be.

We told you so !—for by ourselves we gauge
The average standard of our human race,
And know full well the world is but a stage,
And actors who our local footlights face
Act still the same when in a distant place.

But New Australian hopes, that now lie low,
E'en though they be as though they ne'er
had been,
Have not been born in vain—we tell you
so !
The good will live and grow, for sorrow
keen
Still paves the way for joy all unforeseen.

Let true Australians do, let others dream ;
And right with us must triumph over wrong
If love but reign. Far off the day may seem ;
The upward path is hard, the journey long,
But on the heights resounds love's true, sweet
song.

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THE 25TH JANUARY—AULD AYR.

MA brither Scots, though far awa' the nicht,
 We dearly lo'e the land where first the licht
 O' day we saw—aye dear's her ilka name,
 Auld Scotland, Scotia, Caledonia, Hame !
 Each heart the nicht this land o' gumtree
 spurns,

Mem'ry transports us tae the hame o' Burns.
 We're in Australia, but let fancy stray,
 And look ance mair ower Ayr's ain bonnie bay.
 There still the setting sun arrays Goatfell
 In gowden splendour, mair than tongue can
 tell.

Auld Ailsa Craig still stems the ocean tide,
 And guards the entrance tae the Firth o' Clyde.

The Heads o' Ay'r still aft are dashed wi' spray,
And Greenan Castle's much the same the day
As when we first explored its ruined tower—
Stane lang withstands time's sair destroying
power.

The Doon still flows between its banks and
braes,

Bonnie as when Burns first sang in its praise ;
And up its stream the lordly salmon sooms
When on the banks the wild rose sweetly
blooms.

The River Ay'r by Craigie's woods pursues
Its onward course—there still the poets muse.
The “auld toon” lover, by its rippling stream,
Still tells to willing ears love's ain sweet dream.
Men come and go, but still the sun will shine,
And love will reign, as in the auld lang syne.
I ken ye min', when frosty winter cam',
The glorious fun there was on each mill-dam,
Skating and sliding ; while we're sweltering
here,

At hame, as like as no', the ice will bear.

'Tis said each Scot who o'er the earth may
roam

Gets aye mair Scotch the further he's from
home—

That “distance lends enchantment to the
view ;”

O' ither toons this may be but ower true,
But Ayr ma powers descriptive a' surpasses ;
Think o' her honest men and bonnie lasses :
Burns ca's them sae, and it is no for me
Tae prove him wrang—at least we a' agree
They micht be waur ; but Robin Burns himsel',
Though born in Ayr, broke barriers by the spell
Of genius. Birthplace never can confine
Hearts large as his, nor dare we draw the line
With earthly limits—o'er them poets rise,
And live beyond the veil, and thus we prize
Each burning thought, each grand verse left
behind,
When Death has claimed his own ; deathless
the mind
Lives on and on, and while the ages roll,
Will cheer and strengthen many a weary soul.
O'er all the earth to-day the message rings,
“Princes and lords are but the breath of
kings.”

“Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a’ that ;
That sense and worth, o’er a’ the earth,
May bear the gree, and a’ that.
For a’ that, and a’ that,
It’s comin’ yet, for a’ that,
That man to man, the warld o’er,
Shall brother’s be for a’ that.”

TO AN OLD FRIEND.

MY good old coat ! the storms of many a year,
On land, o'er sea, in cold, in sultry climes,
Have changed you to the yellow and the sere
Of autumn—still we've had our good old
times.

'Twas long ago that you were sent to me,
In newest fashion cut—fit like a glove,
But not too tight—no overcoat should be
In such a plight that longs for owner's love.

I loved you, of myself you seemed a part,
For first with you I felt a very man,

And strong to do. Ah ! young was then my
heart,
Full of bright hopes and many a brilliant
plan.

Some buttons wanting, pockets slightly torn,
A collar shapeless, and a tinge of green
Through your once glorious brown ; you look
forlorn,
And ne'er again will be as you have been.

Yes, you are getting old—a greasy gloss
Reflects your age upon your well-brushed
back ;
Perhaps you wonder why I do not toss
You to some beggar that a coat doth lack.

You wonder not ? Is that what you would say ?
You know my hopes, like your good looks,
have gone,
And you and I together still must stay,
My poor old coat, alas ! my only one.

WINTER.

THE piercing cold winds blow o'er paddocks
brown and bare ;

Leaner and leaner grow the stock on winter
fare ;

The ribs of horses show 'neath rough coats
void of sheen,

As on they vainly go searching for grasses
green.

The earth now takes her rest till sounds the
voice of spring ;

The cold winds from the west but fleeting
sadness bring.

But sadness from my heart no spring will e'er
remove ;

Summer is but a part of winter, O my love !
If I ne'er see again the love-light in your eyes,
The sun shines all in vain in blue unclouded
 skies,
Cold shall my heart remain till life within me
 dies.

THE EXILE.

I AM watching a snow-fed river as it flows to
the distant sea,
And I love its song of triumph as it rushes
wild and free
O'er the rocks that bar its progress, round the
islands that divide
But cannot stay its waters, that join again and
glide,
Now slowly round a deep bend, now swiftly
o'er the gravel,
But always onward, seaward, by day and night
they travel.
Sun-claimed from the snow-clad mountains, by
many a kindly ray,

And meeting a mighty river, they reach the
far-off bay.
They mingle with the ocean, and with its
currents flow,
Borne on its restless bosom, warmed in the
sunshine glow,
Till they join the foaming breakers, that tell
of a journey o'er,
As on the bar they thunder, and reach the
Queensland shore.

Oh! my heart goes with the river, I scent the
old gum leaves,
And hear the parrots screaming high above me
in the trees ;
The Queensland sun is sinking, and the peace-
ful night draws nigh,
With glorious moonlight spreading o'er bush,
and sea, and sky.
My black mare in the gloaming wants neither
whip nor spur ;
Old Bessie is heading homeward, that is enough
for her.

She knows each track and short-cut for home—
her feed is there ;

And Nipper's bark sounds joyous in the calm
of the evening air,

Till Bluey, the lazy house-dog, hears it and
barks reply ;

A light at the station is gleaming—the mare
would like to fly.

Steady, Bess ! she pulls at her bridle, she hears
a welcome neigh,

And thinks not of the miles behind, the long,
hot, weary day.

She may lack the finer feelings, but there's
poetry in her pace,

'Mid the rushing of frightened cattle, when the
wild steers madly race.

Her smooth coat's always shining, like the
moist leaves in the morn,

But she shines all round, the gipsy, when she's
heading for her corn.

The boys are home before me, sitting smoking
at their ease,

For the evening meal is over, reading, chatting,
as they please.

The news of our little world, all its pleasure
and its care,
Will be served up with my supper when the
saddle is off the mare.

No more ! not a post is standing to mark the
well-known spot ;
I am watching a snow-fed river, but the past is
ne'er forgot.
All unchanging are the bush-paths, though the
old slab-house has gone,
And the friends that in it gathered are far-
scattered, every one.

Go ! follow the winds and find them—some
winning wealth and fame,
Some worn and aweary, longing for the ending
of the game.
For brightest hopes oft vanish, and hearts once
joyous break,
When love is lost, and all is lost, all but the
farewell stake.

The game soon will have one ending for all,
 come weal or woe ;

Thank God ! there is rest for the weary—rest
 after the final throw.

I am watching a snow-fed river, and I hear but
 a sullen roar

As the waters vanish for ever, as past days, for
 evermore.







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